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COUNTRY Cuba

SUBJECT Jose FERNANDEZ

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REFERENCES

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FIELD REPORT NO.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE: A former Cuban IS officer who served with the Cuban Intelligence Service until April 1964.

Headquarters Comments

The following report is one of a series containing personality information provided by the source and includes supplemental information from the records of this Agency.

It is requested that the addressees take no action on any of the individuals mentioned in the personality reports without first checking with this Agency.

Source identified a photograph of Comandante Jose FERNANDEZ and said that his nickname is "El Gallego." FERNANDEZ is the chief of all army training schools from cadets up. He is not connected with Cuban Intelligence.1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8

Headquarters Comments

1. In a report dated 11 May 1960, from an untested source, it was reported that one Jose FERNANDEZ, possibly identical with the above Subject, was a Cuban Ambassador on an arms buying missions in Rome.

2. In June 1962 a Cuban national, untested, whose father was an old army friend of Jose FERNANDEZ, aka "El Gallego," reported the following information:

FERNANDEZ is Chief of Artillary Schools in Habana Province; he frequently gives lectures on artillery weapons at a School for Members of the Western Army (La Escuela para los Miembros de Ejercito Occidente).

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He was a captain in the army during BATISTA's time and was in prison for his party in the 4 April Movement until his release by CASTRO. FERNANDEZ was not known to be a Communist and, at the time of this report (1962), was not considered to be one He attended artillery schools in the United States (dates and places unknown) and speaks English well. He is well educated and well trained for the position he holds. He is often referred to as "El Gallego Fernandez." FERNANDEZ allegedly was chief of the operation against the invaders of Playa Giron in April 1961. He was described as having been born about 1921, being six feet one inch tall, 185 pounds, having light grayish eyes, light brown hair, a fair complexion, white even teeth, and an oval face. He speaks with a Castillian accent.

3. A fairly reliable source, in a report dated 17 July 1962, stated that Major Jose Ramon FERNANDEZ was the Chief of the Soccion Preparacion y Organizacion Combativa (Section for the Preparation and Organization of Warfare - SPOC), the Cuban Army's key man for defense against invasion, and the military brains of the country. He had access to all secret information. FERNANDEZ received his instructions exclusively from Fidel and Raul CASTRO with whom he is in personal contact. He received his military education in the United States. He is intelligent and reportedly not a Communist.

4. A Cuban national, untested, reported in September 1962, that the facilities of the Military Academy at Camp Managua were being utilized as a training center for officers, officer-candidates and non-commissioned officers. Major Jose FERNANDEZ, aka "El Gallego," has an office on the ground floor of the first building as you enter the camp. FERNANDEZ and a General Enrique LISTER prepared all the training schedules, pamphlets, and training aides, as well as joint exercises in which air ground (armor and infantry) have participated.

5. In a 14 November 1962 report, an untested source said that Comandante (fnu) FERNANDEZ is the only Cuban official who is completely within the confidence of the Soviets with respect to the military fortifications of the Habana area.

6. [An official 24 Spanish Service] in a report dated 18 May 1963, stated that an unidentified "usually reliable source" said that Major Jose Ramon FERNANDEZ, known as "El Gallego," is the one who made the preparation for CASTRO's trip to the Soviet Union in February 1963. FERNANDEZ arrived in Habana from Moscow two days before CASTRO's surprise departure.

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7. A fairly reliable source, in a report dated 7 August 1963, stated that she did not think FERNANDEZ was a Communist as he has always had Catholic tendencies but that he is a correct soldier and puts the military above everything. He is divorced and his ex-wife is living in Miami with their two daughters, Francis, born in 1951, and Alicia, born in 1955.

8. A source who is a high ranking Cuban military officer who has good contacts among Cuban officials (he has not submitted many reports, but they appear to have been accurate) reported in September 1963 that Major Jose Ramon FERNANDEZ Alvarez, Chief of Training, General Staff of the Cuban Rebel Army, is anti-Communist and a military type in the strictest sense of the word. He sticks to his military duties and scrupulously avoids politics; he keeps himself completely isolated from all political elements. He is proud of his present status and thankful to CASTRO for it; for fear of losing it he appears unwilling to undertake any kind of activity against the CASTRO regime. CASTRO is undoubtedly knowledgeable of FERNANDEZ' attitude and has sufficient confidence in him to retain him in his present position. CASTRO also is aware that he has few officers with the military discipline, know-how, and experience possessed by FERNANDEZ.

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